

GFOASC

THE GOVERNMENT FINANCE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH CAROLINA NEWSLETTER



VOLUME 17, ISSUE 1

SPRING 2009

Spring Conference is Coming!

(Exciting new location)

Kevin Yokim, Spring Conference Chair

The GFOASC Spring as finance officers are only a day. (Of course, Conference will be held critical as we try to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the financial information we provide to our various departments and agencies. This conference will help to strengthen our desire to be the best we can be for the department or agency we represent.

So come to this conference to be encouraged, challenged and to network with your fellow finance officers from across the state. The cost is low, and it takes you out of the office for

See you in the spring!

Kevin Yokim

Spring Conference Chair



"Raising the Standard"

Providing up-to-date information and news affecting the government finance officer profession in South Carolina.

Dates to Remember:

**Luncheon Meeting
March 13, 2009**

**Spring Conference
May 4, 2009**

**Fall Conference
October 4-7, 2009**

**GFOA Annual Conference
June 28 – July 1, 2009**

2009 Fall Conference Planning is Underway!

Stacey Hamm ~ Fall Conference Chair

The 25th Annual GFOASC Fall Conference will be held October 4-7, 2009, and we will be returning to the Myrtle Beach Convention Center and Sheraton Hotel. The Fall Conference committee has started meeting and planning, and they have many exciting events planned. I hope you all will plan to attend. This conference offers a great value with an average of 16 units of CPE. I am looking forward to seeing all of you there. Please watch the Web site for more details as they become available (www.gfoasc.org). If you have ideas or suggestions, please visit the site and let us know—we are happy to hear from you!

Don't miss this great CPE and networking opportunity!

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Scott A. Ludlam, GFOASC President

“This is our
Silver
Anniversary! “
Happy 25th
Anniversary to
GFOASC

Welcome to 2009 and **Happy 25th** Anniversary to GFOASC. Yes, this is our Silver Anniversary!

Just some quick thoughts to share as we get ready for a busy Spring.

First, we have two CPE classes scheduled. Steve Blake, CPA, with Cline, Brandt, and Kochenower will instruct a class on “The Yellow Book” on April 3rd. Wayne Sams, CPA, with the State Auditor’s Office will instruct a class on “The Single Audit” on July 24th. Both classes are held at Seawell’s in Columbia. Registration is on the website at www.gfoasc.org.

Second, we have our Spring

Conference on May 4th at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center. Kevin Yokim, CPA, with Florence County will chair this year’s Spring Conference. We look forward to seeing you there. Again, more information is available on our website.

Fiscal 2009 is a challenging year and will probably become more challenging. Many of us need CPE’s to maintain certification. I encourage you to register for our CPE classes and our Spring Conference, as this is an inexpensive way to obtain CPE’s.

Our Fall Conference will be held in Myrtle Beach from October 4th to the 7th. Stacey Hamm is our President-

Elect and Fall Conference Chair. We hope to frame this year’s conference in such a way to keep costs down, so that as many as possible may attend. I know travel restrictions are in effect, so we will do our best to make the Fall Conference as inexpensive as possible.

If you have questions or concerns, please call me at (803) 734-8699.

Best Regards,

Scott A. Ludlam

GFOASC President

2009 Continuing Professional Education Opportunities

By James Absher, Jr., CGFO, Chairman, Program Committee

As government finance professionals, we are constantly faced with a changing financial environment. These changes can take the form of changing economic conditions, regulatory changes, accounting standards creation or modification, or changing federal or state laws just to mention a few. Therefore, as finance professionals we must constantly engage in the process of continuing education. The Government Finance Officers Association of South Carolina strives to assist its members in the area of continuing professional education by holding annual association conferences in the spring and fall of each year as well as providing other educational programs.

The continuing professional

education opportunities offered by the association including the spring and fall conferences can be found at www.gfoasc.org. However, I would like to take a moment to mention the current continuing professional education programs already finalized for the current year. The current CPE programs scheduled are:

- **April 3, 2009** -Auditing, The Yellow Book and Internal Controls
- **May 4, 2009** - 2009 Spring Conference: “Raising the Standard”
- **July 24, 2009** - The Single Audit
- **October 4-7, 2009**- 2009 Fall Conference

Locations and program descrip-

tions can be found on the GFOASC website, including registration forms.

In addition to the above scheduled CPE events, the association also holds regularly scheduled luncheons throughout the year to allow members and other government finance professionals to meet over lunch to discuss current financial topics. These luncheons provide an excellent networking occasion. The first luncheon for this year is scheduled for March 13, 2009 at Ryan’s on Bower Parkway in the Harbison area in Columbia, SC.

If anyone has any topic(s) that you would like to have addressed in a CPE program, please contact me or another

Program Committee member. The committee welcomes input from members concerning topics for future CPE programs.

Finally, I would like to personally thank the GFOASC members who have agreed to serve on the Program Committee. The committee makeup is as follows:

James Absher, Jr., Chairman
Karen Wicker
Angela Gunter
Crystal Burr, CGFO

“ Good Times Ahead for S.C.?”

Good Times Ahead?

In late 2003, I spoke with Dr. William Gillespie, Chief Economist for S.C., and then wrote an article for our GFOASC newsletter. In 2003, our state was undergoing financial distress to such degree that I thought GFOASC should publish information relevant to the economic downturn. The title of my article was “Good Times Ahead for S.C.”. Good Times were ahead. The years to follow 2003 were good economically for S.C. Then, 2008 hit. I sat down with Dr. Gillespie in mid-January for another visit. I simply asked “what happened”? He proceeded to pull out charts and bar graphs and explain the scenario according to the numbers. Below is some of what he shared with me. I hope you will find it interesting, and hopefully the years following 2008 will be good for S.C. once again.

During my visit, Dr. Gillespie shared a chart showing general fund revenue to the state for the years 2007 through December 2008. Revenue for 2007 was \$7,124,792. Revenue for 2008 was \$6,902,435 or down about 3%. Not so bad. Then, in December 2008, fiscal 2009, the BEA estimated that annual revenue would be down about 8% more. So for the fiscal 2009 year, revenue was down over 11% or nearly \$1 billion in revenue. The Budget and Control Board, as a result,

issued mid-year budget reductions.

Dr. Gillespie then shared another chart. This one was titled “Percent Change in S.C. General Fund Revenues”. This chart shows the history of our state’s revenue. Since 1953 our state has experienced an increase in general fund revenue every year except three: 1955, 2002, and 2008. All three years had a decrease of about 3%. Projected revenue for the 2009 year is down 8.3% (BEA estimate on 12/10/08). Even during the recession of 1991 we had revenue growth of .3%. As you can see, the drop for FY 2009 is significant, resulting in budget cuts to agencies that likewise have not been seen in many years.

Why is the state’s revenue down?

There are many reasons the state’s revenue is down. The recent increase in energy prices and the mortgage crisis are part of the cause. The bottom line is that the financial crisis shook the markets, which in turn eroded confidence and then resulted in shoppers “slamming their wallets shut”.

With lack of confidence in the market, resulting in fewer sales of goods, layoffs are not far around the corner. Dr. Gillespie had yet another chart: “Initial Claims for Unemployment”. New claims for unemployment surged 125% in November 2008, compared to

November 2007. Likewise, new jobless claims in December 2008 were up 57% to 55,000 over December 2007.

Some good news is that the revenue for the remainder of fiscal 2009, at least as of December 10th, does appear relatively flat. Fiscal 2009 revenue stands at \$5,754,381,105, and fiscal 2010 is estimated at \$5,701,975,677. It will be interesting to see how the remainder of the year plays out. Unemployment in S.C. will be a major factor as we go into the Spring-time, and our state’s budget will depend on many factors with sales tax collections and unemployment playing a key role.

I appreciated Dr. Gillespie’s time that he spent with me. I hope to spend time with him again as we approach fiscal year 2010, and I hope the information he has to share is a little brighter.

By: Scott A. Ludlum

GFOASC President

“Good
Times
Ahead for
S.C.?”

MIKE SHEALY TO SPEAK ON MARCH 13, 2009 AT RYAN’S ON BOWER PARKWAY IN HARBISON AREA

The next GFOASC quarterly luncheon will be held at Ryan's at 1304 Bower Parkway in the Harbison area of Columbia at noon on Friday, March 13, 2009. Mike Shealy, Budget Director of the Senate Finance Committee, will talk about budget updates and economic stimulus for South Carolina.

If you would like to attend this luncheon, please RSVP to Karen Wicker, our luncheon coordinator, at karen.wicker@sto.sc.gov.

GFOA NATIONAL UPDATE

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**Karen L. Wicker, CGFO, CPM ~ State
Representative**



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Awards Programs

GFOA established the Distinguished Budget Presentation Awards Program to encourage and assist state and local governments to prepare budget documents of the very highest quality that reflect both the guidelines established by the National Advisory Council on State and Local Budgeting and the GFOA's recommended practices on budgeting and then to recognize individual governments that succeed in achieving that goal.

GFOA established the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Program to encourage and assist state and local governments to go beyond the minimum requirements of generally accepted accounting principles to prepare comprehensive annual financial reports that evidence the spirit of transparency and full disclosure and then to recognize individual governments that succeed in achieving that goal.

Congratulations to **Dorchester County** for receiving the GFOA Distinguished Budget Presentation Award! It was my pleasure to present this award to Dorchester County on February 2 at their County Council meeting.

If you or your governmental entity has received an award, such as the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting or The Distinguished Budget Award, from GFOA and would like to have a representative from GFOASC present that award, you may contact me at (803) 734-9871 or email karen.wicker@sto.sc.gov.

GFOA 103rd Annual Conference

Join thousands of Budget and Finance Professionals for GFOA's 103rd Annual Conference to be held in Seattle, Washington from June 28 – July 1, 2009.

This year's conference, entitled "Financial Strategies for Challenging Times" will be offering 78 technical sessions, covering all areas of public finance including: accounting, auditing, and financial reporting; budgeting and financial planning; cash and investment management; debt management; pensions and benefits; management and policy; and technology and digital government. Participants may earn up to 21 CPE credits. To register or get more information follow the link to the GFOA website at www.gfoa.org.

Employment

Please visit the
GFOASC Web site
Employment link
often. New positions
are posted there
with contact information and these
are updated
frequently!

**GFOASC
05.04.09
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